



Liverpool Wins Race for World's Largest RORO/Container Ships

Atlantic Container Line (ACL) has chosen the Port of Liverpool as the UK port of call for its new five-strong fleet of the world's largest RORO/container ships (CONROs) after a review of potential schedules, market potential and opportunities for its North Atlantic Services

Peel Ports Group retained the transatlantic services and will make a £10million investment in Liverpool to widen the Seaforth Passage and create a dedicated car storage area capable of handling 70,000 vehicles per year.

ACL has been operating the services connecting Liverpool with ports in North America and Europe since 1969 and has now agreed an extended 10-year contract with Peel Ports Group. In addition, ACL is expanding its Liverpool office to concentrate its commercial, marine and logistics operations work in the city, increasing staff numbers by 40% to over 180 people.

ACL has the five new G4 CONRO vessels currently under construction in China, each with container capacity of 3,800 teu, compared with 1,850 teu for ACL's five current G3 ships. In addition they will have 764 teus of RORO space against 525 teus now and space in the car decks for 1,307 vehicles against 1,000 now.

They will be delivered from the middle 2015 with the fifth and final vessel expected in service early 2016. The vessels have been designed to go through Liverpool's Gladstone lock as the RoRo operations are most efficiently managed on the flat water of the enclosed Seaforth Dock. They will not be using the new in river berths currently under construction at the £300m Liverpool2 deep-sea container terminal which will accommodate new post-Panamax vessels.

David Huck, Port Director, Port of Liverpool, said: "Our relationship with ACL is an extremely positive one and we've worked very closely with their team on our investment programme to significantly reduce transit times through the dock system, accommodating the significant extra volumes and new operating systems that the new fleet will require.

"We're continually exploring ways to enhance and future-proof our facilities, giving a wide range of customers swift and efficient access to the best multi-modal transport links in the UK."

Ian Higby, Managing Director ACL UK said: "This contract greatly strengthens our strong links with Liverpool. The port's enhanced facilities are specifically designed to handle the increased volumes the new fleet will create and it is ideally placed to serve our core UK and Irish markets"

ENDS

Notes to Editor

About the G4 Vessels

Atlantic Container Line has signed a contract with Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding to build the five largest CONROs in the world. The new vessels will be the first of their type ever built. They will be bigger, faster, greener and more efficient than their predecessors.

About ACL

Since 1967, ACL has been a specialised transatlantic carrier of containers, project and oversized cargo, heavy equipment and vehicles with the world's largest combination RORO/Containerships. It was founded as Europe's first container line by a consortium of Swedish, French, Dutch and British shipping lines, including Cunard Lines of Liverpool.

ACL offers five transatlantic sailings each week and also markets the Grimaldi Lines direct RORO/Container service between the US and West Africa. The company also offers service for non-containerised cargo from North America to the Mediterranean, Middle East, South Africa, Australia and the Far East.

The company's headquarters are in New Jersey, USA with offices throughout Europe and North America. ACL is a Grimaldi Group company.

About Peel Ports

Peel Ports is strategically located to serve the whole of the United Kingdom. Five major gateways from Clydeport to Medway handle a broad spectrum of international trade amounting to more than 65 million tonnes of cargo a year.

At the centre of the country and the heart of the group are the Port of Liverpool and the Manchester Ship Canal, now one continuous water highway forming a single port facility of major strategic significance.

The Manchester Ship Canal container shuttle service will move in the region of 20,000 containers across a distance of 40 miles between the ports of Liverpool and Manchester in the coming year. That volume is set to increase in 2015 when Liverpool2, Peel Ports' landmark deep water terminal, becomes operational.

Liverpool2 will allow vessels up to 13,500 TEU to call directly at the Port of Liverpool, meaning shipping lines will be able to operate some of the world's largest vessels in close proximity to the UK's central logistics hub and a population of 35 million consumers within a radius of 150 miles.

TEU is the standard industry abbreviation for container units, and is an acronym for 'twenty-foot equivalent unit'.

<http://www.peelports.co.uk/>